



The Fifth Commandment

Introduction

Do you know what cryonics is? It's the practice of freezing a human corpse immediately upon death with the hope that the body can be unfrozen and brought back to life when a cure is found for the cause of death. Some people spend a lot of money to have their bodies cryogenically frozen. Why do you think they would do that? Do you want to do that? Do you think cryonics will ever work?

Opening Prayer: *Heavenly Father, I have indeed transgressed your commandments. I have been impatient in trials. I am unsympathetic and unmerciful. I do not help my neighbor. I am unable to resist sin. I do not tire of doing wrong. Dear Lord, pour out your grace on me and give me your Holy Spirit to help me to avoid anger, hatred, and hurting to harming anyone. Help me to follow my Savior's example of helping others in any way they may need. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Lesson Aim: What does God teach us about his wonderful gift of life?

Part One

Read Exodus 20:13.

1) What is the Fifth Commandment?

Read Genesis 1:26-2:7.

2) What is special about mankind and human life?

3) What makes us different from animals?

Read Genesis 4:1-16.

4) What made Cain angry with his brother Abel?

5) How did God try to stop Cain from murdering his brother?

6) How did God still show love for Cain even after he murdered Abel?

7) As a result of his sin, what happens to Cain?

Read Deuteronomy 32:39.

8) Who alone has the authority to give and end life?

Read Isaiah 55:6, 2 Corinthians 6:1-2, and Acts 17:26-27.

9) The most urgent opportunity every person has is the opportunity to come to faith in Jesus as their Savior from sin. How long does that opportunity last?

For this reason, one's life is referred to as their "time of grace." God, in his grace, allows people to reject him without immediately going to hell, for a time. Turning from rejection is needed before the time is up.

To shorten or prematurely end someone's time of grace before they come to know their Savior would be the worst thing that could happen to them.

Read Romans 13:4.

- 10) To whom has God given the authority to end life if it is necessary to protect the time of grace of others?
- 11) To whom must a murderer (and all of us) ultimately answer for what he has done?

The right of the government as God's representative to end life includes the authority to sentence capital punishment as well as the authority to send a nation to war. We see several examples throughout the Old Testament of God's people, the Israelites, going to war to fight for what is good and right. War should not be entered into lightly, but held out as a last resort exempt from the Fifth Commandment. Soldiers who kill defending the authority of the government God has placed over them are not murderers.

KEY POINT 1 - The gift of life is important because God gave it to me as a time of grace.

What I've learned so far:

Part Two

Read Luke 10:25-37. - Remember that Jews and Samaritans did not like each other and did not get along.

- 1) What was this man who spoke with Jesus trying to do?
- 2) Why did he ask Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?"
- 3) Describe the actions of the three men who passed by the man who had been beaten and robbed:
 - A. The priest:
 - B. The Levite:
 - C. The Samaritan:
- 4) What is especially remarkable about the Samaritan's actions?
- 5) The Bible says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." By doing that we will obey the Fifth Commandment. When we ask, "Who is my neighbor?" what is the answer that Jesus gives us with this parable?
- 6) So, we learn from this parable that the Fifth Commandment requires us to love and serve whom?

Read Matthew 5:21-22.—"Raca" would have been just about the most offensive thing you could say to someone. "You fool" is a simple criticism that might not even offend someone, but it's still not nice.

- 7) What point is Jesus making about crimes against the 5th commandment?

Read 1 John 3:15.

- 8) This passage reiterates Jesus' point in Matthew 5. What is described in 1 John 3:15 as a form of murder?

Read Proverbs 23:20.

9) We sin against this commandment when we harm our own bodies in any way. What harmful activities is this verse describing?

10) Why is drinking alcohol or eating to excess sinful?

This section of Proverbs talks about ways people harm their own bodies, namely, by drinking too much of an alcoholic beverage. But there are many other ways: eating too much or not eating enough, sleeping too much or not enough, exercising too much or not enough, using drugs that aren't prescribed by a doctor. You can probably add several more to this list. Examine these examples carefully. If you harm your body, and most likely also shorten your life, then you are not treating your body or life as a precious gift from God.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15, Ephesians 4:31-32, and Matthew 25:35-36.

11) List words from these verses that describe what our attitude and actions toward others should always be.

12) How does God want us to honor his precious gift of life? What are some specific ways we can do that?

KEY POINT 2 - God teaches me to honor life in what I think, say, and do.

What I've learned so far:

Part Three

Study questions 79-86 in the Catechism and answer the following questions in your own words.

- 1) What term do we use to refer to a person's lifetime?
- 2) What different things does God forbid regarding his gift of body and life?
- 3) What does God require of us with this commandment?
- 4) What does God protect with this commandment?

Helpful Passages

Hebrews 9:27—This verse relates how one's time of grace is their only chance to come saving faith in Christ.

Romans 12:19

If someone does harm us, should we try to get even? Why or why not?

Psalms 139:13-14—Life begins at conception. The Fifth Commandment forbids abortion.

Psalms 31:15—We know that murder is wrong. That includes murdering one's self. We've mentioned that it is wrong to harm yourself in any way. To be clear, that includes harming yourself to death.

James 2:15-16—Don't let your love just be all talk.

Main point — God teaches us that we should honor his gift of life in everything we think, say, and do, because he gives it to us as a time of grace.

Final considerations:

- 1) God protects our own and our neighbor's life because ____ .
 - A. everyone is entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
 - B. he created mankind in his own image, and he gives us this life as a time to come to him in faith.
 - C. our life and health are the most important and valuable things any of us will ever have.

- 2) In the Fifth Commandment God really requires of us that we ____ .
 - A. be especially kind and helpful to those who are kind to us.
 - B. be kind and helpful to everybody, even our enemies, especially in regards to their bodily well-being.
 - C. respect the lives of our enemies, but certainly not give them any help so long as they continue as our enemies.



Agree or Disagree

- 3) ___ To knowingly do or use anything that will harm our own or another's health is a sin.
- 4) ___ Unchastity is also a sin against the Fifth Commandment.
- 5) Based on James 2:15-16, Luther said, "If, therefore, you send away someone who is naked when you could clothe them, you have caused them to freeze to death. If you see someone suffer hunger and do not give them food, you have caused them to starve. So also, if you see anyone innocently sentenced to death or in similar distress, and do not save them, although you know ways and means to do so, you have killed them." Do you agree or disagree?

- 6) Does the Fifth Commandment forbid all taking of life? Explain your answer.

- 7) Does the Fifth Commandment forbid all taking of human life? Explain your answer.

- 8) How can we fail to keep this commandment by doing nothing?

- 9) How do we sin against God's precious gift of life? List as many possible correct answers as you can think of.

What I've learned:

Commit to Memory:

- The Fifth Commandment with Luther's explanation.
- The Ten Commandments—Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5